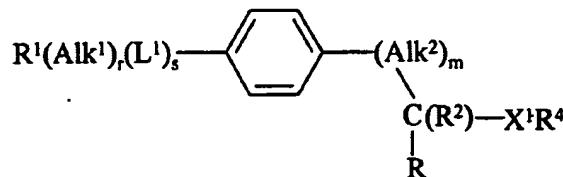


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A compound of formula (1a):



wherein:

R is a carboxylic acid;

R^1 is an optionally substituted pyridyl group;

Alk^1 is an optionally substituted C_{1-6} aliphatic chain or an optionally substituted C_{1-6} heteroaliphatic chain containing one, two, three or four heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups chain selected from $-\text{L}^2\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{L}^2\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{L}^2(\text{CH}_2)_2-$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{L}^2(\text{CH}_2)_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{L}^2\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{L}^2(\text{CH}_2)_3-$, and $-(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{L}^2(\text{CH}_2)_2$, where L^2 is selected from the group consisting of $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{S})-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{CON}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{CSN}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CO}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CS}-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CON}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CSN}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{SON}(\text{R}^5)-$, and $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{SO}_2\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$;

R^5 is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group;

L^1 is $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{S})-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{CON}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{CSN}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CO}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CS}-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CON}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CSN}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{SON}(\text{R}^5)-$, or $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{SO}_2\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$;

r and s , which may be the same or different, is each zero or an integer 1;

Alk^2 is a straight or branched alkylene chain;

m is zero or an integer 1;
 R^2 is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;
 X^1 is a group selected from $-N(R^3)CO-$, (where R^3 is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group); $-N(R^3)SO_2-$, $-N(R^3)C(O)O-$ or $-N(R^3)CON(R^{3a})-$ (where R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group);
 R^4 is an optionally substituted C_{1-6} aliphatic, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkenyl, C_{7-10} bicycloalkyl, C_{7-10} tricycloalkyl, C_{7-10} bicycloalkenyl, or C_{7-10} tricycloalkenyl group;
and the salts, solvates, hydrates and or N-oxides thereof.

2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
5. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein $-(Alk^1)_r(L^1)_s-$ is a $-CH_2O-$ or $-CON(R^5)-$ group where R^5 is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group.
6. (original) A compound according to Claim 5 wherein $-(Alk^1)_r(L^1)_s-$ is a $-CONH-$ group.
7. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein Alk^2 is $-CH_2-$, m is an integer 1, and R^2 is a hydrogen atom.

8. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein X¹ is a -NHCO-, -NHSO₂-, -NHC(O)O- or -NHCONH- group.

9. (original) A compound according to Claim 8 wherein X¹ is a -NHCO- group.

10. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein R⁴ is an optionally substituted straight or branched C₁₋₆alkyl group or an optionally substituted C₃₋₇cycloalkyl or C₇₋₁₀tricycloalkyl group.

11. (original) A compound according to Claim 10 wherein R⁴ is an optionally substituted straight or branched C₁₋₄alkyl, cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl or adamantyl group.

12. (currently amended) A compound which is:

N-Isopropaloyl-*N*-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

N-Cyclopropaloyl-*N*-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

N-Acetyl-*N*'-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and or N-oxides thereof.

13. (original) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to Claim 1 together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, excipients or diluents.

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

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17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)